In the Name of Allaah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I praise Allaah, Who has brought near to us the means of goodness and has opened the gate of repentance to His slaves, and I send blessings and peace upon the Messenger of Allaah.

I have put together these few words for everyone who wants to change his situation and his actions so as to earn the pleasure of his Creator and achieve happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. I ask Allaah to make it of benefit to those who read it and tell others about it, and I ask Allaah to forgive sins both open and secret.

Repentance in Ramadaan

My dear brother,

I congratulate you on the occasion of this blessed month, the month of repentance, forgiveness and ransom from the Fire, the month of goodness and blessing, the month of generosity and kindness. I say to myself, to you and to everyone who is falling short in his duties towards his Lord:

> "O you who did not have enough of sin in Rajab,
> So he continued to disobey his Lord during the month of Sha'baan,
> Now these two months have been followed by the month of patience,
> So do not let this be a month of sin too.
> Recite the Qur'aan and glorify your Lord during this month, striving your utmost,
> For it is the month of glorification and Qur'aan." [Arabic poetry]

> The month of Ramadaan has come…
> so come to Allaah, O seeker of good

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When the first night of Ramadaan comes, the devils and demons are chained up, and the gates of Hell are closed and not one gate of it is opened. The gates of Paradise are opened and not one gate of it is closed. And a caller calls out: 'O seeker of good, come to Allaah; O seeker of evil, desist.' Allaah will have ransomed some people from the Fire, and that happens every night." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah with a hasan isnaad).

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Ameen, ameen, ameen." It was said, "O Messenger of Allaah, you climbed up on the minbar and said, 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.' He said, 'Jibreel (peace be upon him), came to me and said, "Whoever witnesses the month of Ramadaan and is not forgiven so he enters Hell, may Allaah cast him away. Say Ameen." So I said Ameen.'" (This hadeeth was narrated by Ahmad and is saheeh).

Yes… Ramadaan has come, so turn to your Lord – Whom you have disobeyed – beseeching Him and fearing Him, regretting and weeping… and say,

> "O God of the Universe, I am returning (to You)."
> "O Giver of all good things, give me guidance,
> For there is no good without guidance.
> Overlook my mistakes with forgiveness, kindness and mercy,
> For no one else can bestow forgiveness." [Arabic poetry]

My brother, if you are not forgiven, if your eyes do not shed tears and your heart does not break before your Lord in this month, then when?

My brother, why do you not shed tears for fear of your Lord even once? Do you not feel that your heart is close to your Lord during this month? Do you not think that this is an opportunity for you to draw closer to your Lord and increase in humility, repentance and submission, so that it may be the true beginning of your returning to your Lord so that you may be more closely connected with Allaah?

> ***"While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety* [Muhammad 47:17 – interpretation of the meaning]**

"O man!" Allaah rebukes us and tells us (interpretation of the meaning):

> ***"O man! What has made you careless about your Lord, the Most Generous?* [al-Infitaar 82:6]**

Indeed, O man, what has made you careless about your Lord, so that you have become so audacious in disobeying Him and transgressing His limits? Is it because you are ignoring His blessings? Or because you forget that He is always watching over you, and that He is almighty?

> "I am the one who closes the doors, striving
> in sin (in secret), although the eye of Allaah is watching me.
> How patient Allaah is with me, when He lets me off
> Although I persist in my sin, and He covers me." [Arabic poetry]

My brother… do not look at how small your sin is… but look at how great is the One Whom you are disobeying.

My brother… Do not let Allaah be the one whom you care the least about of all those who are watching you.

Good news for you

Here I bring you good news from your Lord and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

> ***"Say: "O 'Ibaadi (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allaah, verily, Allaah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"* [al-Zumar 39:53]**

> ***"And those who invoke not any other ilaah (god) along with Allaah, nor kill such person as Allaah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace; Except those who repent and believe (in Islamic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds; for those, Allaah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"[al-Furqaan 25:68-70]***

This is a great blessing and a great deal, for Allaah will change your sins into good deeds… Allaah is Most Great. No one misses out on such a great deal except one who is ignorant or who does not care about this blessing.

So repent – my dear brother – if you want this great deal, “Allaah will change their sins into good deeds”.

And listen to what your beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to encourage people to repent:

“Allaah is more delighted with the repentance of His slave than one of you who suddenly finds his camel laden with supplies after losing it in a barren land.” (Agreed upon)

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah says: ‘O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and put your hope in Me, I will forgive you no matter what you have done, and I do not mind. O son of Adam, if your sins were to reach up to the clouds of the sky, then you were to ask Me for forgiveness, I will forgive you and I do not mind.’”

And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah says, ‘O My slaves, you commit sins by night and by day, but I forgive all sins. So ask Me for forgiveness and I will forgive you.’”

And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah stretches forth His hand by night to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the day, and He stretches forth His hand by day to accept the repentance of those who sinned during the night. (This will continue) until the sun rises from the west.”

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw a woman looking for her young son among the prisoners of war. When she found him, she embraced him and gave him her breast. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, “Do you think that she could throw her child into the fire?” They said, “No.” He said, “Allaah is more merciful towards His slaves than this woman is towards her child.”

Allaah is Most Great… After knowing of this generosity, can we ignore the matter of repentance? Can we delay repenting? O Allaah, glory be to You, how merciful You are. Glory be to You, how kind You are. Glory be to You, how generous You are.

> “When my heart grew hard and I did not know where to turn,
> I made the hope of Your forgiveness my way out.
> I thought that my sin was so great, but when I compared it
> To Your forgiveness, my Lord, Your forgiveness was greater.
> You never cease to forgive sin, and You never cease
> To be generous, out of Your bounty and kindness.” [Arabic poetry]

Be frank with yourself

What is keeping you from repenting and following the path of righteousness? I can imagine you saying, “My family, community and friends. I am afraid of repenting then going back to my sin. My sins are so many, how can I be forgiven? I am worried about my family and my wealth.” I say to you: Do you think that you will say that to your Lord on the Day when you meet Him? No, by Allaah… These are imaginary obstacles which can only be overcome by one who fears his Lord.

“If the soul had great ambitions,
The body would be exhausted by trying to fulfil the desires of the soul.”[Arabic poetry]

Be proud of your religion, and sincerely resolve to do good and to continue doing so, putting your trust in Allaah. And remember the mercy of your Lord and the vast extent of His forgiveness.

My brother, if the Angel of Death were to come to you at this moment, would you be content to meet your Lord in this state? My brother, please do not run away from yourself or try to avoid checking on yourself. If you do not check on yourself today, then in your grave you will regret it, at the time when regret will be of no avail.

A new beginning

Know that repentance is not limited only to this month – it may take place during this or any other month. But why should your new beginning not take place in the month of goodness and blessing? A man may be born twice, on the day when he emerges from the darkness of his mother’s womb into the light of this world, and on the day when he emerges from the darkness of sin into the light of obedience. So be like this.

I advise you, my friend, to catch up with good people who will benefit you even after you die – by Allaah’s Leave – by making du’aa’ for you. Catch up with them and keep company with them wherever they come and go; be patient with them until you meet your Lord, then it may be said to you and to them:

“Salaamun ‘Alaykum (peace be upon you) for you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home!” [al-Ra’d 13:24 – interpretation of the meaning]

A story and an attitude

There was a man who was with the righteous, then he left them and started to fall short in his religious commitments. One day he was going on a trip, and his car overturned on the road… He was resuscitated, then he died…

The sad news came… we prayed over him, and he was taken and placed in his grave. His grave was filled with bricks and earth, and he would never come back. Tears flowed and hearts were filled with grief. One of the righteous people – I think he was righteous, but Allaah knows best and I do not praise anyone before Allaah – who was one of his former friends, sat by his grave with his head bowed, making du’aa’ for him.

Thus I knew what kind of friends could benefit a man after his death.

My brother, beware lest you become one of those of whom Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) the Day when the Zaalim (wrongdoer, oppressor, polytheist) will bite at his hands, he will say:

‘Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger (Muhammad).

Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so and so as a Khaleel (an intimate friend)!

He indeed led me astray from the Reminder (this Qur'aan) after it had come to me. And Shaytaan (Satan) is to man ever a deserter in the hour of need'"[al-Furqaan 25:27-29]

Before the door is closed

My dear brother, before the door is closed, decide – from now, and do not delay – the path that you want to follow, which will be your path in this world and in the Hereafter.

What great joy and happiness is to be found when a person comes back to his Lord, regretting (his sin) and joining the caravan of the righteous…. By Allaah it is joy which no one tastes except those who experience this.

My brother in Allaah, if you have resolved to repent and turn back to your Lord, then know that there are conditions which must be met when repenting:

1. Regret for what is past.
2. Giving up the sin.
3. Resolving not to go back to it. But if you do it again, then repent to Allaah again – but your resolve must be genuine.
4. The repentance must come before the death-rattle reaches the throat and before the sun rises in the west.

Ibraaheem ibn Hamad al-Mansoor